

Food Policy For All: Inclusion of Diverse Community Residents on Food Policy Councils

Eds. Molly McCullagh and Raychel Santo

Adapted from Molly McCullagh's Master's Thesis research, Tufts University, May 2012.

Research funded by Dr. Julian Agyeman and the Tufts University Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning.



Executive Summary

Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are committees of food system actors that propose policy and programming changes to strengthen a region's economy, environment, and community as they relate to the food system. As of January 2014, over 270 Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are operating at various capacities at local, regional, tribal, and state levels in the U.S. and Canada. FPCs typically emphasize cross-sector collaboration on community-level and systems-oriented solutions to produce an alternative to the current conventional food system.

Despite many FPCs' missions to address inequity in healthy food access across neighborhoods and demographics, there has been little research related to how community residents who are most impacted by social inequities or who are most at risk for food insecurity are involved in FPC activities. This research is focused on assessing why and how FPCs include diverse community residents (here defined as low-income consumers, women, mothers, seniors, youth, and people of color) in their policy and programming work. Examples drawn from interviews with a variety of FPCs shed light on current efforts of inclusion and inspire suggestions for improvement.

Alternative food system activists and organizations seek to create just and sustainable alternatives to the current food system. However, some authors and activists have questioned the extent to which the alternative food movement can actually shape such a food system without explicitly attempting to counter the racism, classism, and sexism present in our current system. Their alternatives have been criticized as "reproducing the same political and economic disenfranchisement inherent in the industrial food system"¹. Of particular concern is that the

leadership of alternative food system organizations tends to be majority white staff who often come from well-educated backgrounds; this often separates them from the food insecure communities they serve^{2,3,4,5,6}. As South Bronx food activist Karen Washington says, "right now, we (meaning people of color and low-income communities) are being talked about in terms of the statistics, but we're not being included in the solutions"⁷. These authors and activists entreat us to reflect on how the work of members of the alternative food system movement is accountable to those they are "assisting" and how actors in the movement are participating in the empowerment of people.

The FPCs we interviewed gave many reasons for why they felt inclusion of general community residents was important to their work. For many councils, involving community residents was important because "everyone on the council wants the council to be representative of the city so that it can be effective" (26), having positive outcomes on their stated goals. Councils interviewed gave two main reasons for inclusion: so that they could check to make sure their thinking was in line with the community's needs and to encourage the empowerment of community residents to make changes in the food system.

Methods for inclusion

Through activities related to food retail, food access, school meal programs, or urban agriculture, FPCs are involved in programming and setting policies that impact diverse community residents in many ways. What are the ways in which they "invite others to the table" to plan for these policies and programs? Specifically, how are community members whose lives are directly affected by these

policies and programs included in setting the agenda and making decisions? Through in-depth interviews, a collection of common practices as well as some insightful lessons and challenges emerged.

Council-based techniques

Council-based techniques are methods that relate to the organization of the council or activities that happen during regular council meetings.

Overview of council-based techniques:

- Language about inclusion written into the council’s mission statement
- Designated seats
 - Direct representation
 - Indirect representation
- Ask about diversity measures in the council member application
- Directly recruit council members
- Use official attendees/non-voting capacity
- Invite youth to the council
- Use working groups/committees
- Consider meeting/event location and time
- Consider meeting structure

Project-based techniques

- Plan events and projects that intentionally involve community residents
 - Community Food Assessments
 - Research projects
 - Food summits
 - Community food system tours
 - Participatory budgeting activities
- Attend other organizations’ meetings
- Establish synergy with existing community processes and organizations
- Focus groups and open houses

- Public education
 - Film nights
 - Workshops
- Offer incentives

Common challenges

Many interviewees reiterated common challenges facing Food Policy Councils but also discussed others, specifically related to the inclusion of diverse community residents, including:

- Council’s structure is not yet conducive for community inclusion
- Reliance on volunteer council members
- Lack of resources
- Culture and language barriers
- Meeting times and locations
- Limited number of seats
- Challenges of engaging people in “food policy”
- Motivating others, getting community buy-in and leadership
- Anti-government sentiments
- Diversity of the food system sectors, but not in personal demographics

Further recommendations towards inclusion

Further ideas for FPCs to consider in order to achieve higher levels of meaningful inclusion include:

- Inclusion throughout the council’s development
- Knowing your community
- Council member education and training
- Relationship building
- Take lessons from community organizing

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	4
Background	5
The framework for inclusion.....	6
Methodology	8
Inclusionary Techniques	10
Challenges.....	24
Discussion	28
Recommendations towards inclusion	31
Conclusion	37
Recommendations for further research	38

Introduction

As of January 2014, over 270 Food Policy Councils (FPCs) are operating at various capacities at local, regional, tribal, and state levels. FPCs typically emphasize cross-sector collaboration on community-level and systems-oriented solutions to produce an alternative to the current conventional food system.

Many alternative food system activists and organizations seek to create just and sustainable alternatives to the current food system. However, some authors and activists have questioned the extent to which the alternative food movement can actually shape such a food system without explicitly attempting to counter the racism, classism, and sexism present in our current system.^{3,4,6,8}

Critics call out the underrepresentation of a diversity of people in leadership roles and argue that we cannot be effective at transformative change in the food system without the direct consultation or participation of people who are the most negatively impacted by the failures of the current food system - specifically communities of color and low-income communities. According to demographic predictions, over fifty percent of the United States population will be non-white by the year 2050⁹. This shift is important to reflect on as we think about how alternative food movements can become mainstream and relevant to the majority of Americans. As FPCs operate on a local, county, tribal, or state level, they have an opportunity to be more innovative and inclusive of local residents than food policy decisions that occur on a federal level, and to improve equity in the local food system by amplifying the voices of city residents who traditionally have limited access to power.

...we cannot be effective at transformative change in the food system without the direct consultation or participation of people who are the most negatively impacted by the failures of the current food system - specifically communities of color and low-income communities.

This research seeks to examine how *diverse community residents* (defined here as low-income consumers, women, mothers, seniors, youth, and people of color) are included in the work of FPCs. Any resident should certainly be welcome to participate in local food system issues, but this research is specifically concerned with how community residents who are usually marginalized in society and the food system can be better included in food system change. Examples drawn from a variety of American and Canadian FPCs shed light on the current efforts towards inclusion and inspire suggestions for improvement.

Background

Since the inception of the first Food Policy Councils (FPCs) in the 1980s, they have identified and addressed various policy and programming "gaps" in their local food systems. FPCs take on a wide variety of activities that are attuned to the needs of their communities and are relevant to their geographic scope (city, regional, tribal, and state). They have supported the creation of markets for locally-produced foods, the preservation of farm land, the alteration of zoning laws to allow food production in cities, the adoption of tools that encourage more informed and healthy food choices, and importantly, the improvement of food security for low-income people.

While there are often distinctions between the work, funding, staffing, and operation of state-level and local-level Food Policy Councils¹, no matter their geographic scope, FPCs bring together people from a variety of food system sectors to collaborate on common issues at regularly occurring meetings. Traditional food system sectors represented include agricultural production, processing/manufacturing, distribution, retail, consumption, and waste management, but FPCs also commonly include research and education components. This multi-sectoral composition contributes to the potential to create "innovative programs, policy and planning approaches that might not have been created" without such synergistic efforts¹⁰.

The composition of the council, in terms of food sector representation, professional background, and personal interests, plays an influential role in the specific types of food policies and programs the council undertakes. For the most part, FPCs solicit applications for council members and appoint members for a certain term length. Most councils have a limited number of seats, often between 10 and 20, and so can only officially accommodate a certain number of members. To reconcile this challenge, some councils draw on "non-member" representatives to participate on committees or task forces without being appointed as full council members. Other councils hold open meetings in which anyone is able to voice their opinion¹⁰. Councils generally operate with a low budget and exist in an "in-between" status; many are aligned with government departments but do not have legislative authority to make policy decisions. Rather, they rely on close relationships with politicians, who then introduce proposals to the government's voting body.

One of the appeals of FPCs to some is that they have the potential to encourage change of the conventional food system by expanding participation in the alternative food system and in activities that promote social justice.

The framework for inclusion

“Inclusion” in the context of this research relates to how those communities which are most affected by food system injustices are given a voice in defining food-related problems and shaping solutions. Citizen participation can range from informing community members of decisions that have already been made, to asking community members for their opinion on a list of pre-defined topics, to giving the community members the authority to define the topics themselves. It is important to remember, however, that efforts to include “the community,” and poor people especially, “does not guarantee that their needs will be met or that they will have control over decision making and institutional accountability; this is the principle of the “illusion of inclusion”¹¹. Rights of inclusion are insufficient unless these rights are met by obligations to meet people’s needs. Otherwise, they can be purely symbolic and serve to further alienate the powerless^{12,13}.

The challenge of many social justice movements, including the alternative food movement, continues to be how to “address social justice issues when, by definition, those who confront the most egregious social justice problems are the least powerful in the community”¹². These low-power groups suffer from structural inequities that have limited their access to resources, knowledge, or connections that typically lead to participation in decision making processes, both in the general social system and in the food system. The empowerment and inclusion of the community residents who are most affected by social injustices at the forefront of decision-making and programming must be essential to food system reform advocates. FPCs are in a unique position to promote community food security through the engagement of the community in such food policy decisions.

The empowerment and inclusion of the community residents who are most affected by social injustices at the forefront of decision-making and programming must be essential to food system reform advocates.

Mark Winne writes that “there are few examples in the social movement literature, for instance, of one class of people bringing about substantive changes for another class of people” (Winne 2008:191). This is not to say that “outsiders” with intellectual and political capital were not influential. Aldon Morris and Suzanne Staggenborg state that “to be successful, social movements require that a myriad of intellectual tasks be performed extremely well”¹⁴ and highlight the importance of the educational capital that leaders from privileged backgrounds in accomplishing these tasks. However, Winne argues that we must not overlook the importance of marginalized and underprivileged groups in social movements and says that “the victories secured by those movements were due to the leadership of the people most affected by their outcomes”⁶. The most important source of support could come from low-income communities and communities of color that have been most deeply harmed by the conventional food system, they say. This practice of inclusion is common already with environmental justice and community organizing groups¹⁵, but it is just beginning to enter into the alternative food system movement.

When the goals of the alternative food organizations are to improve the nutrition status of marginalized groups, practitioners need an understanding of the cultural

background of those communities in order to create an effective opportunity for change¹⁶. Additionally, Rachel Slocum calls for using an anti-racist lens that recognizes institutionalized racism, inequality, and privilege that exist within the food system and alternative food organizations, including FPCs.⁴

An underlying challenge in diversifying the alternative food movement is the association of the movement's practices and behaviors with white culture. The "spaces" of the alternative food movement, such as farmers' markets, food co-ops, community supported agriculture (CSA) programs, and even FPCs, tend to be white-dominated and "whites continue to define the rhetoric, spaces, and broader projects of agro-food transformation"². A first step in critical thinking about institutional racism and oppression in the food system is to "understand how a regime of white supremacy" was created and has been maintained in America, and then apply it to the food system context¹⁷. White and/or privileged members of FPCs or other community food security organizations can examine their privilege and understand how they can leverage their positions of privilege to distribute resources more equitably. Many activists in the alternative food system, despite their rhetorical support for social justice, "don't understand how they participate in the continued oppression of people who are poor and people who are starving"¹⁸. A Detroit

activist describes the potential role of whites in the alternative food movement from her perspective:

"The urban ag[riculture] movement [is] predominantly filled with white faces, white voices, white interests. . . . white people don't realize that there is such a thing as white privilege. So when you come into a community and you make decisions about doing good things—these are good and important things—the people that you are affecting are either not equal at the table or are just as integrally involved and invested as the people who got the money. Whites engaged in the movement often have access to philanthropic resources outside the community and are able to leverage their positions of privilege to provide food and gardening resources to the less fortunate." (Ebony, Detroit food justice activist)¹⁹

Echoing Julie Guthman, the objective of this research is not to condemn FPCs for not doing enough, but to raise questions that address why inclusion of diverse community residents must go beyond just "inviting others to the table," which Guthman points out is "an increasingly common phrase in considering ways to address diversity in alternative food movements." A critical corollary question is "Who sets the table?"².

White and/or privileged members of FPCs or other community food security organizations can examine their privilege and understand how they can leverage their positions of privilege to distribute resources more equitably.

Methodology

Research Question

How do Food Policy Councils include diverse community residents in their policy and programming activities?

This research addresses what tools FPCs can utilize to engage diverse community residents beyond just professionals in the food system in creating a just and sustainable food system. Specific attention is paid to community members who have been most affected by social food system inequalities, for example Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients, residents of food deserts, soup kitchen clients, and other diverse community residents (defined as low-income consumers, women, mothers, seniors, youth, and people of color). This included an exploration of existing programs and policies, FPCs' organizational structures, FPCs' decision-making processes, and the views of FPC directors.

Data Collection

Three primary data collection methods were employed in this research: (1) objective review of relevant existing literature and documents; (2) a 16-question online survey distributed directly to FPC directors and through the Food Policy Council listserv as well as the COMFOOD listserv (both coordinated by the former Community Food Security Coalition); and (3) semi-structured interviews with key informants. Jaclyn DeVore assisted with transcribing and analyzing the interview data.

Of the 155 North American FPCs listed on the Community Food Security Coalition's website in 2010 (plus other FPCs we found doing internet searching for additional groups), 87 were deemed "accessible" (with contact information

available and accurate e-mail addresses). We received a total of 53 responses to the survey, which represented 43 distinct FPCs (49% of total accessible). The surveys asked for background information about the FPC itself as well as examples of policies and programs the FPC undertook that impacted diverse community residents. The survey included short answer and multiple choice questions. We analyzed qualitative answers by coding them thematically.

In addition, the study involved semi-structured interviews with a directed sample of FPC leaders to explore issues of inclusion more in depth. Informants were chosen from survey respondents who volunteered to be contacted for a follow-up interview. We contacted additional informants who had not completed the survey but had interesting procedures documented elsewhere that were encountered over the course of research (such as newsletters, blog posts, or organization websites) that were related to our research questions. The selection of interview participants aimed to include representatives of FPCs whose councils have undertaken food system policy-making and programming that either directly or indirectly involved community residents in general, with specific interest in those that involved diverse community residents. We looked for FPCs that represented a variety of different administrative arrangements, histories, geographic regions and social/cultural contexts, but primarily focused on FPCs with specific methods or activities. We specifically reviewed the survey responses to find FPCs that:

- Mentioned innovative programs that were not replicated by other councils, high levels of community participation, or a unique

operational policy in regards to participation from diverse community residents.

- Mentioned challenges in involving diverse community residents.
- Had demonstrated maturity in their FPCs' programming and processes by having completed projects with outcomes to discuss or could talk about how the involvement of diverse community residents in policy-making and programming on their council had changed over time.

We primarily spoke to FPC coordinators (staff persons or chairpersons), although some informants were regular members of a steering committee. FPC coordinators were chosen because they are usually the primary, and sometimes only, contact provided on FPC publications websites. We selected FPCs that represent a range of level of activity (local - 13, county - 4, regional - 1, state - 1) as well as a variety of regions from the United States and Canada (Northeastern - 3, Midwest - 8,

Southern - 2, West Coast - 3, Western Range - 1, Canada - 2).

Data Analysis

For the purposes of maintaining confidentiality and to facilitate coding and analysis, we assigned each survey respondent a unique identifier: a number between 1 and 53. In some cases we interviewed multiple representatives from a council, in which case each respondent was assigned a designated letter following their council's number. To protect confidentiality, survey respondents and interviewees are intentionally not identified by their geopolitical region. Quotations from surveys and interviews are used throughout this paper to describe, in respondents' own words, the experiences, successes, and challenges of involving diverse community residents in FPCs; they have been edited minimally for reading coherence.

Approval for research methods and techniques in accordance with recognized standards was sought and granted from the Tufts University Institutional Review Board.

Inclusionary Techniques

The underlying premise of this paper, restated, is that in order to be effective at addressing inequalities in the food system, those who experience the inequalities must be directly engaged in defining the problems and identifying solutions. The following sections provide evidence of tools and approaches FPCs are using to engage diverse community residents in their work. Examples are case-specific, but may provide inspiration for other councils in thinking about common approaches for inclusivity. Because of the differences in scope and structure between state-level and local-level councils, this research most strongly applies to local-level activities.

Why is inclusion important?

Many councils expressed interest in including diverse community members for two primary reasons - so that they could check to make sure their thinking was in line with the community's needs and to encourage the empowerment of community residents to make changes in the food system.

Even though many of the FPCs' members work with community members on a daily basis - as WIC administrators or food bank personnel - keeping in touch with the larger community voices was seen as important to make sure that the issues they are taking up are the ones that are seen as most important by the community.

"A lot of times we'll sit in these meeting rooms and say, 'This seems to be a big issue,' but it's important to make sure that it is. It's not just an academic exercise. This really is a community concern that needs to be addressed." (8)

However, even if making connections with diverse community residents has not led to sustained engagement or involvement of those residents on the council itself, in some cases those consultations have at the very least informed the future work of the council. One council that consulted with people staying at a homeless shelter and food bank users said that these consultations made their "policy seem real" and "really pushed the direction of some of the work that we've taken on" (8).

Equally important is the desire of FPCs to empower community residents to "feel like 'I do have a place in this community and I can make change, positive change in the community'" (9). In some cases, diverse community residents shared that they had never had a formal venue in which to voice their opinion before.

"...the majority of folks are low/limited-income and the kids were like, 'Oh my gosh, I can't believe you're asking us what we think. Nobody ever asks us anything'. They were excited about the opportunity to share about their community." (8)

One FPC chair felt that lack of community engagement might have directly contributed to the failure of a new grocery store that city agencies had helped develop in a specific food desert neighborhood. The interviewee felt that the development decision was more of "an intellectual process of 'Well, there's no food there and the people who live there need food therefore we should put a grocery store in'" and that "people in that community were really never engaged in making that decision. Maybe they already had a store that they shopped at or, who knows, but they didn't shop there in the end" (22).

Start with the mission

This research showed that many FPCs' missions directly address issues of food system disparities and that they often undertake projects that are aimed at improving community food security measures for diverse community residents.

Most frequently, FPCs stated their goals as acting as a forum for coordinating the action of a diverse array of stakeholders, improving the food system for the benefit of their region's residents, enhancing the environmental sustainability of the food system, and supporting local economies. Most interviewees indicated that improving food security was a central goal of their council, supported either through specific policies and programs or through an "unstated mandate to consider issues through the lens of those with limited

incomes" (7b) that engenders their council's mission and decision.

Projects/policies that address food security/diverse community residents

FPCs undertake projects that are suited to their specific cities and regions. Some indicated that food security projects are a main focus of their work because of their community's demographics: "In a city like [ours] it has to be!" (26). The specific types of programs and policies that FPCs undertake that directly affect diverse community residents related to a number of categories. However, the most common responses were around food retail, food access, school meal programs, and urban agriculture. The table below shows the categories and examples given by respondents.

Programs and Policies	
Category	Specific examples given by survey respondents
<i>Food Retail and Food Access</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote an initiative for healthy corner stores• Establish farmers' markets in low-income areas• Enable farmers' market vendors to use electronic benefits transfer (EBT) machines and accept WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons• Improve access to fresh foods through: grocery delivery at libraries; new grocery stores in food deserts; produce stands at transit centers, mobile markets, and community kitchens• Develop a local food guide that provides information about nutrition and which farmers' markets accept EBT, WIC, and Senior FMNP vouchers
<i>Community Food Assessments</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community-based mapping project in low-income neighborhoods and food desert areas

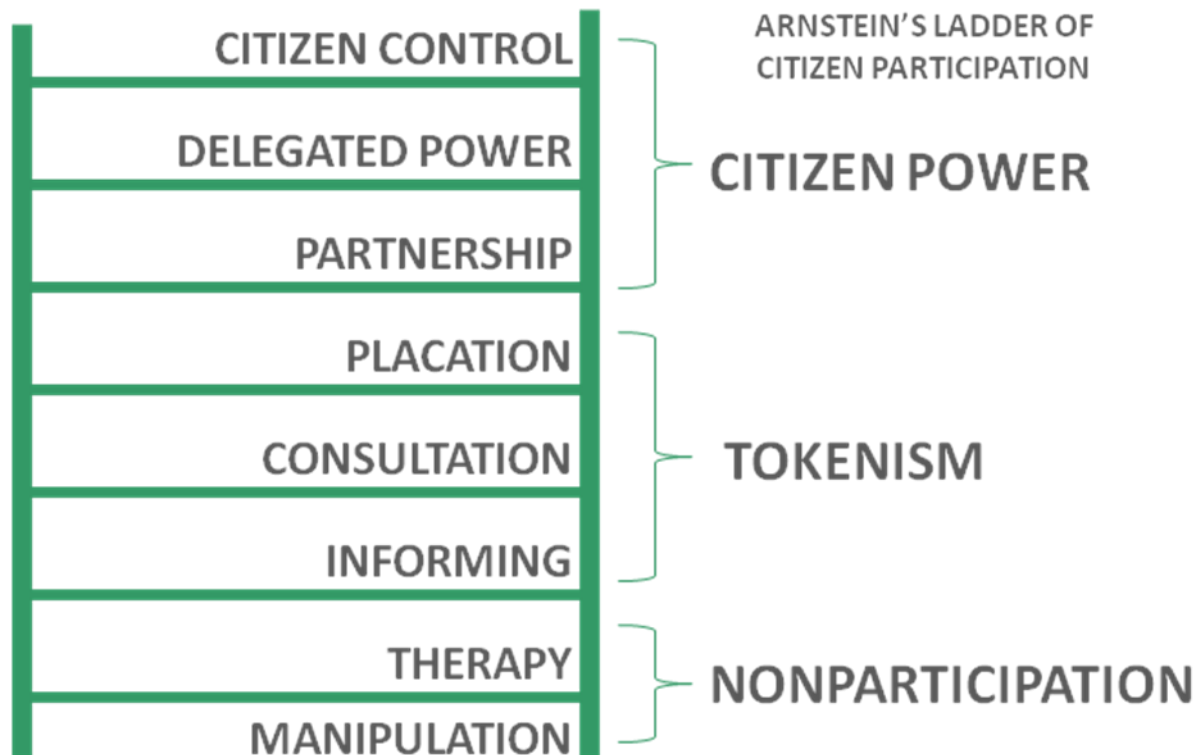
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish a report that identifies and discusses the different interventions to address rural and urban food gaps • Support a PhotoVoice project (using participatory photography as a tool to enable positive social change) targeted to specific cultural or immigrant groups
<i>Transportation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with public transportation department to prioritize bus routes that improve access from low-income neighborhoods to healthy food outlets and emergency food providers
<i>Urban Agriculture</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish or advocate for gardens in low-income or food desert areas • Challenge high fees for zoning variances or vendor permits for small-scale urban agriculture
<i>Emergency Food Programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support emergency food program efforts to procure and supply more healthy food choices from local sources
<i>Workshops/education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition education in low-income neighborhoods or to food bank populations
<i>School meal programs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish or advocate for school gardens, farm-to-school initiatives, healthy vending machines • Change state law to remove competitive foods from schools • Advocate for the federal Farm to School grant program in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization Bill
<i>Local food purchasing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommend that their city/county/region adopt an institutional food purchasing policy for government agencies, schools, and prisons

Methods for inclusion

Through activities related to food retail, food access, school meal programs, or urban agriculture, FPCs are involved in programming and setting policies that impact diverse community residents in many ways. What are the ways in which they "invite others to the table" to plan for these policies and programs? Specifically, how are community members whose lives are directly affected by these policies and programs included in setting the agenda and making decisions? Through our in-depth interviews, a collection of common practices as well as some insightful lessons and challenges emerged. They divide generally into "**council-based techniques**" and "**project-based techniques**," offering a variety of valuable

options for inclusion at many levels, from direct inclusion on the council to consultation on specific projects.

Food Policy Councils might benefit from thinking about how their techniques align along Arnstein's Ladder of Citizen Participation (below). Practices such as open houses that serve to primarily notify the public of upcoming activities would fit closely within the "informing" level, while Community Food Assessments, if done with community-based researchers, could fit within the "partnership" level. Future research could assess the degree to which the actual practice of these techniques is promoting high levels of citizen power.



Council-based techniques

Council-based techniques are methods that relate to the organization of the council or activities that happen during regular council meetings.

Overview of council-based techniques:

- Language about inclusion written into the council’s mission statement
- Designated seats
 - Direct representation
 - Indirect representation
- Ask about diversity measures in the council member application
- Directly recruit council members
- Use official attendees/non-voting capacity
- Invite youth to the council
- Use working groups/committees
- Consider meeting/event location and time
- Consider meeting structure

Language about inclusion written into the council’s mission statement

Councils can explicitly address diversity in a mission statement, such as “The [council’s] membership should reflect [the region’s] diverse population, including, but not limited to, race, rural/urban residency, gender, and socioeconomic status” (43).

Designated seats

Of the councils surveyed, 16% have specific seats designated on their councils for specific food system sectors. Some of these councils set aside seats specifically for diverse community residents (such as youth) while others set aside seats for advocates (indirect representatives).

Designated seats – direct representation

At times, these designated seats are filled by diverse community members, such as those currently experiencing food insecurity or who are low-income.

“We do have two low-income people who serve on [the FPC] on a regular basis and have continued for several years. One of the things that [the FPC] as a whole really emphasizes is that we do need a lot of perspectives to have a robust conversation.” (24a)

Designated seats – indirect representation

Some FPCs expressed difficulty in retaining non-professional members on their councils. Instead, they have turned to professionals, such as food security advocates, to act as indirect representatives of or advocates for diverse community residents. These indirect representatives include food bank staff members, community organizers, WIC nutrition educators, and soup kitchen directors. While interviewees emphasized the importance of direct representation, they also felt advocates can also play an important role in bridging between one person’s experience and the experience of a broader population, and that representative voices can come from unexpected places.

*“I think that it’s important to have people directly from the community, not just advocates from the social service agency. I will say that people who work on the front lines, who work directly with clients... do get a real breadth of information and can represent a large population and integrate multiple stories whereas individuals represent themselves. **I think there are advantages to having both, especially people who work directly on providing services at an agency on behalf of clients.**” (24a)*

“What we find often in community work is that other people become the voices for

those low-income populations...although they might not identify with some parts of that label. So, our farmers say 'We are low-income.' Our emergency food bank [staff] participants really feel that they have a good insight into situations for their constituency. So, [the council does] get that information somewhat but through different channels." (7b)

One interviewee underscored the need for high levels of sensitivity when asking people to share their personal experiences with food insecurity or discrimination, as well as the need to connect the information of the community member directly with the action of the FPC.

"It would be hard to say, 'Hey, you're on food stamps! Want to come to the Food Policy Council?' If there's a way to make that more comfortable for that person, I think that would be helpful. For people who are in very stressed situations, financially and in their home, it can be hard to step out of that and think about 'Why should I be talking at a meeting and what are the larger issues and how is this going to help change all that?'" (26)

Ask about diversity measures in the council member application

Very few councils designate seats for non-professionals and very few councils explicitly or systematically take personal demographics into account when selecting council members. Instead, demographic diversity occurs unsystematically and is usually a lower priority than other membership qualifications, such as representing a specific sector of the food system or skills and contacts that would be useful to a coalition of this sort.

Directly recruit council members

Interviewees discussed ways that the existing council members could assist in diversifying the membership of FPCs by using personal and professional relationships to bring more people "to the table." One FPC used personal invitations to invite specific people to participate in planning for the council's formation, while others imagine future collaboration with a community health center to bring their most articulate, thoughtful, and passionate clients to meetings.

Use official attendees/non-voting capacity

Some councils struggle with balancing the relatively small number of council seats available with the number of dedicated food system actors whose experiences and voices they want to include. One FPC creates a list of "official attendees" at each meeting, which allows the council to "expand [their] base of people who are providing information, feedback, and assistance in the work that we're doing" (26). These official attendees include officials from the local health department, sustainable food system consultants, and community service agency staff, as well as people active in the city's food system but who don't meet the council's residency requirement so cannot be actual members. In this instance, official attendees lack voting rights.

Other examples of utilizing community members in non-voting capacities include inviting members of the general public to present on a specific topic. For example, one FPC invited a researcher from a university-based food system program to talk about their work with Native Americans, and another has invited professionals to provide information on composting, transportation, school food, or health care.

Invite youth to the council

Six of the FPCs surveyed either currently include youth on their council – either as a designated “youth seat” or otherwise – or have taken steps to include youth in the near future. In general, FPCs define “youth” to mean individuals from high school age all the way up to 30 years old. Councils working with youth chose “youth-centered topics” such as farm internships, school food, and cooking competitions; all topics were suggested by the youth members and youth whom the FPCs had surveyed in focus groups.

One FPC that holds separate youth meetings felt that the separation between the youth and adult council was important. Youth who had attended the adult meetings felt intimidated by the presence of veteran food systems actors who populated the councils. Interestingly, high school students attending the youth-only FPC also expressed that they felt intimidated by the presence of members in their 20s, many of whom had completed college or graduate school or who had been working in the food system field for awhile. To counteract this, the council began including more icebreakers at the start of meetings to give everyone a chance to participate, regardless of previous experience.

FPCs often reach out to existing youth programs to invite their members to participate. Some youth groups were invited to present about their work at the FPC in the hopes that they would continue to be involved with the council's work or become council members. One council plans to form a partnership with some of the high schools in their community that offer agricultural or food training classes, feeling that it is a natural step for their youth and adult leaders or teachers to be involved on the council as part of those programs.

One general council with youth members has planned to meet with them in advance of each general council meeting and prepare the youth.

*“What our plan has been is to always have a youth meeting the day before the large policy council meeting. The plan was to give [the youth some] background on the FPC, background on what is worked on, talk about what's on the agenda, go over it all in detail, answer questions. **We help [the youth] prepare what [they] want to talk about and what they want to say.**” (34)*

Use working groups/committees

Many FPCs use working groups or committees to organize a large general council into more manageable groups that focus on a particular issue. Committees or working groups are useful because they enable people to gain experience with the organization's purpose and culture as well as spend time working directly on topics that are more relevant to a person's experience or interest. Many interviewees recognized that asking diverse community residents to be involved regularly on an FPC wouldn't be successful because of the time demands that pressure many working families and individuals but suggested that there might be other ways to involve interested individuals. Many are still working to figure out “what are the structures and ways to involve members” who either want to be involved in monthly meetings or want to “hop in there for a short-term project” (24b).

Committees or working groups are useful because they enable people to gain experience with the organization's purpose and culture as well as spend time working directly on topics that are more relevant to a person's experience or interest.

One solution to accommodating members with varying levels of commitment is to create distinct levels for community members to engage with the FPC: as a "council member," as a "committee member," and as a "community member," as one council did:

“There are council members, committee members, and community members. Council members have the most responsibility. There’s a max of 12 of us and we have all applied and been selected. We have four committees...Committee members are not council members. They haven’t applied and they don’t have set obligations, but they’re people who want to engage further in an issue...Committee members have the option to be as involved as they want without having any sort of restrictions put on them. Then we have community members who are basically anyone who wants to come to meetings or come to an event or anyone who feels that they’d like to align themselves with us in any way.” (42b)

Working groups may also be used to concentrate attention on issues of meaningful inclusion and diversity. One council, for instance, utilizes a group of council members as an "equity filter" to assess how food security and food access were being prioritized in other working group activities. For example, this group might review a community garden expansion proposal from the urban agriculture committee to assess if new garden locations are near neighborhoods with low access to fresh foods or if garden permit fees can be waived for low-income residents.

Consider meeting/event location and time

Meeting times and locations are particularly important to involving people who aren’t able to attend meetings during the workday. Many FPCs struggle to find a meeting time that works

for all of their diverse stakeholders, including diverse community residents, both for their council meetings as well as public events. In some cases, the councils held separate meetings for each interest group or held film nights and discussions at centrally located places where target groups were already spending time.

Consider meeting structure

FPCs have altered their meeting structures to allow for more public participation. These alterations might include a standard public comment section after each topic of discussion. However they may go beyond just allowing comments and work towards ensuring that people feel comfortable and respected and that their voices are being adequately integrated into the council's discussions. Interviewee 24a described the importance of smaller group discussions and shared leadership that allows everyone's voice to be heard - especially community residents who "haven't been given a voice in the past" and didn't feel "like they have the right to speak up and say what they think."

“Throughout all of that project, we often broke into smaller groups and then brought the larger group back. We shared leadership of that group so that everyone participated in facilitation, note taking, scribing on the board, or reporting back from the smaller group. We really have found that smaller discussions - so that people feel more comfortable and more compelled to actually voice their opinions - are a great way to be sure all the perspectives are actually given.” (24a)

The council also incorporated time to share stories, which they felt was important to the functioning of their council.

“People have stories to tell and it is through that telling of that story that new ideas are formed. But sometimes they can be kind of negative, like ‘I went to this agency and blah blah blah’ and everyone jumps on that. But one of the things that we crafted into the meetings was that sometimes people just need to get their story out and then you can move forward. So we would say, ‘Ok, we’re

*going to have a two-and-a-half-hour meeting and we’re going to spend the whole first hour just letting people check in and tell their story of the week’ and then we would move into the logistics. It really gets the team together and **it provided that space for people to really tell their story and feel like they were being heard and to learn from those experiences as well.**” (24a)*

Project-based techniques

Project-based techniques are activities that happen outside of regular council meetings but affect the participation of diverse community residents in shaping the community’s food system policies.

Overview of project-based techniques:

- Plan events and projects that intentionally involve community residents
 - Community Food Assessments
 - Research projects
 - Food summits
 - Community food system tours
 - Participatory budgeting activities
- Attend other organizations’ meetings
- Establish synergy with existing community processes and organizations
- Focus groups and open houses
- Public education
 - Film nights
 - Workshops
- Offer incentives

Plan events and projects that intentionally involve community residents

In a few cases, FPCs have planned projects and events that are directed at understanding the condition of the food system in their communities and have intentionally involved

diverse community residents in those events or projects.

Community Food Assessments

Community Food Assessments (CFAs) systematically examine a broad range of community food assets and issues to inform change actions to make a community more food secure. CFAs can be undertaken by any group of researchers, but they are often the first activities that FPCs undertake and offer opportunities to survey their community’s food system as well as engage community residents who are directly affected by food insecurity. CFAs are often used as tools to gather citizen input; however, they can also be limited to simply collecting and reporting secondary data without engaging citizens. Researchers combine data from food outlets with poverty and health data as well as data about infrastructure, like transportation routes, to highlight the impact of food access on the community’s health. Interviewees described that one step in their CFA includes conducting focus groups and strategizing with residents in areas designated as food deserts.

“We didn’t want to leave with just ‘Where are the food deserts?’ We really wanted to involve the community, the food desert community. Phase 2 was: we knew that we

had food deserts and that living in one is dangerous to your health, but what do people in the community want to do about it?...[it] includes focus groups from the food desert neighborhoods." (6b)

Community food assessments are great opportunities to directly involve diverse community residents in actively mapping their community resources and analyzing health indicators; FPCs have hired members of food desert communities to conduct surveys that contribute to CFAs.

Mark Winne, former director of food policy for the Community Food Security Coalition, described how investigating the community's food environment can be instructive to FPC members even without direct participation from diverse community residents. FPC members conducted a price survey in grocery stores in the city and surrounding communities. It served as a team-building exercise while also giving the members an informed foundation to their work related to affordable food access and food policy.

"I can say there was a connection from the experience to people better understanding the larger challenge of the lack of supermarkets in the city in the food deserts...We found that a [major grocery chain] in the city and one in the suburbs had different prices. That became a rallying cry to politicize people, to look a bit more closely at how could we use policy to address that imbalance." (Mark Winne, personal communication 2/1/2011)

Research projects

One FPC sponsored a research report on food insecurity that specifically recruited food-insecure people to design and oversee the project. Those participants helped design the research and participated in collecting the data,

and coming up with important questions that the researchers would not have thought to ask.

"The [food insecurity report] was a research project with community participants that was specifically set up to have low-income people, people who used social services for accessing food. We specifically recruited people that met that criteria...We really didn't go in with specific ideas of how the project would be concluded other than recruiting specific people from a low-income demographic." (24a)

Food summits

Another FPC hosted a regional food summit and secured a \$1,000 grant that enabled them to subsidize food-insecure residents to attend at \$25 per person. They estimated that 30% of the participants who attended identified as having experienced food insecurity in their lives. Many of those residents were recruited through months of effort of the summit planning partners, such as food banks and poverty organizations, who each were tasked with recruiting 5-10 people from their client base. This diverse participation of people who had the lived experience of food insecurity, but may not have been as versed in food policy, impacted the pace and tone of the summit.

Facilitators felt challenged to "figure out ways to include people, explain things to people who haven't necessarily read as much, who aren't as formally educated as most of the people around the table" (43). But overall, the inclusion of these new voices made the summit a success in the eyes of the organizers.

Community food system tours

One interviewee described how their FPC engaged Hmong farmers in their community by planning a tour of farms that brought food system stakeholders (including elected officials)

to Hmong farms on the outskirts of their community to help them understand the impact of residential sprawl on farms. Because of the language barriers, “it was a really big deal that [the Hmong grower] stepped up...to explain in broken English to these 75 people from the county” (24b). This event led to additional projects that involved the FPC and Hmong growers acting together to improve the farmers' market access.

Participatory budgeting activities

One FPC member suggested that a way to meaningfully engage any community residents might be through a participatory budgeting activity around public spending in the food system, for example at food banks or school food. Allowing the public to direct the funding around a particular issue enables them to exercise direct control over public funding but also educates participants around the real challenges in current food system policies that are more difficult to convey in a single education event.

Attend other organizations' meetings

A number of FPCs found it necessary to engage other organizations by attending their meetings rather than asking their staff, clients, or members to attend the FPC meetings. They used these opportunities as a way to either gather stakeholder opinions without requiring long-term FPC participation as well as a method to recruit more FPC members.

Two interviewees felt strongly that attending meetings in the community was required when seeking the input of specific communities and in working with people of color who may be distrustful of white leaders working in communities of color.

“I don't think you ever ask low-income people to come to the FPC. I think the FPC

goes to the low-income neighborhood...We are the people who go and sit in the back of the room and listen and come forward when we are asked. I don't know if it's the African American culture or because we're in the South, but there is a different way that you want to approach low-income African American communities. They've had so many white people barge in, 'We're here to help you.' We can be perceived as doing that even when we don't.” (6b)

“Trying to get people of color to our meetings hasn't been effective... [even though] I know these issues are important to them. I've been trying things like I go to their meetings and I go to their organizations.” (34)

Establish synergy with existing community processes and organizations

FPCs often utilize the organizations their members represent, such as food banks or community nutrition education programs, to gather input from community members on specific efforts or the general work of the council. At times, FPCs choose to work in communities that their members already have ties to.

“What we have done is try to engage and get people appointed to our board who are doing [community engagement] work as part of their jobs. So, we have one of our board members who is the Executive Director of a Latino service organization. What he's doing is community organizing in the Latino community...and hopefully that can translate into improving the work that we do on the FPC.” (22)

“Luckily, members of the FPC and the steering committee already work in the neighborhood and so we already had those channels in place...They have people in the community

who go door to door and knocked for the event.” (32)

FPCs also have made strategic partnerships with current planning efforts that are active within a certain community of interest for the council. One FPC was focusing their efforts on a farmers' market that happened to be near a community that was in the process of an official revitalization effort. The FPC was able to reach their intended audience by taking advantage of the community gatherings and festivals that were part of the separate effort. This FPC also made specific relationships with community organizations that helped them reach out to the community and find out how to make the farmers' market more inclusive to everyone, including the type of musical acts booked, the locations where the market was advertised, and the implementation of a coupon program for low-income shoppers.

A particularly inspiring example of an FPC being responsive to a community need warrants a more in-depth retelling. A neighborhood community organizer attended a council meeting and announced that “a national fried chicken chain wanted to come in and the neighborhood didn't want it.” The neighborhood, a classic food desert, already had two other fried chicken restaurants, as well as ten fast food establishments, but no full-service supermarkets. The FPC wondered what they could do to support the community and decided to stage a peaceful protest. They “picked a day and a time where we would all gather on that corner and we put it out so that the media knew that we were going to be there. And they were. TV, print, radio all picked up on the story and were there and broadcasted this. The decision was coming up before the board of zoning appeals in the next week or two after that, so it was well timed” (23). While the board of zoning appeals did approve the restaurant, it only granted a one-year permit. Because of this barrier, combined

with widespread community opposition, the chain decided to not pursue that location. This example demonstrates true potential for a Food Policy Council to use their resources and skills to be responsive to community needs. However, it is unclear how many other councils feel prepared to take on a similar campaign, considering overall time capacity or comfort of council members in taking a more activist stance.

Focus groups and open houses

In addition to tying in with ongoing, community-driven processes, many of the councils commented on how they solicit community input through focus groups on specific topics that the FPCs defined themselves. Focus groups allow FPCs to be in touch with and vet proposed policies with the community in spite of not having direct representation from those communities on their councils. They may consist of existing organized networks, such as a seniors group or a recreational center, or may be recruited only for the purpose of the focus group.

When starting out, one FPC convened public focus groups to comment on the strategies they proposed in order to structure the council's priorities. Answers were recorded and analyzed and used by the council in determining the final proposal, which were then endorsed during a follow-up meeting with forty of the original focus group participants.

Public conversations and focus groups about challenges to obtaining healthy food can be a way to gather information, publicize the council, and build a relationship between the council and the community, “to let it be known that we're working on these issues” and that if “people have concerns they can come to us” (26). These conversations could happen at a variety of places, such as farmers' markets or grocery stores:

"The way we're going to vet our policy recommendations is to do a series of public presentations. We're going to try to go in front of neighborhood associations and rotary clubs and all of those community groups...to talk about a menu of policy choices and vet those ideas with the community. Our process has been: get the data, use the small groups to generate the policy proposals (because they're willing to dig in and find the best practices and make context-appropriate policy recommendations) and then go out and get public input on them." (11)

Engage people with hands-on projects

Many interviewees said that a good way to engage residents was to appeal to the residents' self interest and taking advantage of "crisis moments" to mobilize people to be politically engaged. Interviewees discussed how community gardeners were mobilized when the City Council announced a change to zoning regulations that could impact urban agriculture and how discussing school lunch naturally attracts parent involvement. "When it comes to action," those with the most personally at stake are "the ones who showed up and advocated for those changes" (8).

"We don't wake up one morning and say 'Oh, I want to do policy work...' It doesn't happen that way. You get there by putting your hands – literally – in the soil for a long period of time. Then realize, 'Ah ha, I can do more of this, or I can do it better, or I can protect it, if I begin to engage in local policy work and sometimes state work as well.'" (Mark Winne, personal communication 2/1/2011)

...[Take] advantage of "crisis moments" to mobilize people to be politically engaged.

Public education

FPCs often sponsor community education events such as film nights and workshops. Some interviewees mentioned strategies they used to achieve high levels of community participation that sometimes carry over into more long-term engagement with the FPC.

Film nights

Capitalizing on the recent production of a number of food systems-related films (such as Food, Inc., Two Angry Moms, Fresh, etc.), FPCs have sponsored community film screenings, often combining them with a panel that helped facilitate discussion afterward. Some councils have had success reaching new audiences by specifically partnering with another organization or community. These events have often resulted in new members joining the steering committee or working group.

One council made a deliberate decision to screen Food, Inc. in a low-income African American community that their council already does a lot of work in. This ability to draw on partners to reach out to the community drew many "new faces" to the event, beyond standard food system advocates that are already active on food system issues. The planning committee included several people and organizations from the neighborhood, and they were careful to choose panelists who had ties to the community where the film was screened, such as a politician who represented the district and a nutritionist who works with lower-income populations, and also recruited a moderator from a neighborhood community group. They made a deliberate effort to not have a feeling of "We are the experts and we're coming here to tell you this" (32a).

"A lot of times around issues with food you get the same people, the foodies or the same activists, and especially [our city] is kind of a

small town so you tend to see the same people around the same topics all the time. I thought that we had about 80% of folks that were definitely from the neighborhood and not part of the professional world. It felt really successful." (32a)

Workshops

Another FPC coordinator mentioned that they felt a huge part of their ability to draw participants from beyond the already-engaged food system advocates in their community was their decision to find leaders from the community who had personal experience in topics related to the food system to teach the workshops. These leaders directed workshops on corner store improvements, beekeeping, healthy soul food cooking, food preservation, school gardening, starting neighborhood farmers' markets, social media, and video documentation.

Using community residents as facilitators helped this council achieve their goal of sharing food system knowledge that had been evolving in separate pockets of the city and empowering residents to take action, rather than waiting for a non-profit or government intervention.

Offer incentives

Multiple FPCs described the incentives that they used to compensate community members for their participation in council activities. Focus group participants often received gift certificates while many meeting coordinators made sure that food (either snacks or a full meal) was a part of the meeting or community focus group. The most innovative example of incentives involved

accessing funding from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in their state to pay low-income participants (who were eligible for TANF funding) to attend council meetings and for their time spent creating a report on food insecurity in their community. The FPC also obtained additional grant funding to supplement the TANF funding and collaborated with their food co-op to also offer gift certificates to the food co-op in exchange for participation on the council.

"Basically we appealed by writing a letter to the state [TANF] office to request that all the hours put into the research project by the participants would be counted towards their work, much like going in to interview for a job.... This was our rationale: if it was a professional representing an organization, the organization pays for their time to go to meetings and that is part of a lot of people's jobs who work in social services - to go to meetings and participate in or advocate for projects. So our thought was that was also true of anyone who goes to meetings and carries out the parts of the project. So we got a grant to fund their time [at \$10 per hour] or people could get a discount at the food co-op." (24a)

This subsidy succeeded in incentivizing residents who might not have otherwise participated. Unfortunately, the TANF funding did not continue after the report was released; the grant to subsidize council participation was not accessible for another year, and the low-income community members did not continue their participation.

Challenges

Depending on their structure, funding, government support, and public support, FPCs face a variety of challenges. These may be significant barriers or may be easily overcome. Many of the challenges experienced by FPCs have already been addressed by other authors^{1,10,20,21}, including:

- overall challenge of working with diverse membership and constituencies
- designing an effective organizational structure
- balancing focus between policy and program work and between structural and narrow focus
- measuring and evaluating a council's impact
- financial and political challenges
- lack of institutional support
- complex local political environments
- lack of staff or sharing staff with governmental departments
- lack of data on a variety of issues relevant to a local food system

Many interviewees reiterated these challenges but also discussed others, specifically related to the inclusion of diverse community residents, including:

- Council's structure is not yet conducive for community inclusion
- Reliance on volunteer council members
- Lack of resources
- Culture and language barriers
- Meeting times and locations
- Limited number of seats
- Challenges of engaging people in "food policy"
- Motivating others, getting community buy-in and leadership
- Anti-government sentiments
- Diversity of the food system sectors, but not in personal demographics

Council's structure is not yet conducive for community inclusion

Some FPCs have conducted community outreach or held public events, which then attracted interested members of the public to inquire about joining the council. However, the council members realized that they were still relatively "unstable" or in need of greater structure that would enable them to better support new council members. In those cases, councils are waiting until they are more formalized and have moved beyond discussing the council's organization to actually focus on programming or policy making before they're able to include diverse community residents and take up matters that relate directly to their lives.

"Right now I can't see the benefit of having a SNAP participant or a WIC participant come into a council meeting because the types of discussions are not related to them yet. Discussions have to do with building infrastructure and leadership capacity of the council and are not yet focused on anything that's program or policy related that would directly affect participants in these programs. So we're not there yet." (19)

"We actually had a person on our council for the first year or so who had disabilities and was recruited through a public housing council. I don't know personally if it was difficult for her to attend but she was very irregular in her attendance. Even though we tried to nurture and support and encourage her, she didn't engage. And we haven't really actively tried that approach again. I think that her contributions were pretty limited. That was during our formation, the first year when basically all you're doing is putting together your framework." (7b)

Reliance on volunteer council members

A few FPCs mentioned that their ability to engage community residents was hindered by their reliance on an all-volunteer council or minimal staff time donated from member organizations. Community engagement is time-consuming work, and one FPC expressed that it wasn't a lack of recognition of the value of the community voice, but rather the busy lives of the community members; "people don't [volunteer] because they don't have time!" (22). FPCs are just "not set up to be able to do [community organizing] because they're often a group of volunteers who have other full time jobs" (22).

Lack of resources

In addition to limited time available for members to contribute to FPC-related work, lack of financial resources hinders FPCs' ability to initiate and maintain community engagement. This lack of resources, both time and financial, limits a council's ability to go beyond e-mail communication to reach communities that do not have regular internet access with printed flyers or door-to-door recruitment, for example.

*"We've been talking for months about how to follow up on [the food summit]. **We don't have the resources, so we're not going to have the ability to do the targeted recruiting that we did last time, so I'm pretty sure that we won't get...the same representation of low-income people.**" (43)*

Additionally, lack of time to recruit volunteers prevented one council from involving community members on a project in their own neighborhood; instead they relied on their existing pool of volunteers.

Culture and language barriers

One FPC expressed that they were interested in increasing the diversity of their council members, but that a prominent cultural group, the Hmong community, in particular is a very insular community; both differences in culture and language were barriers to their involvement on the council. In addition to language, communication style was mentioned as a potential challenge if councils attempted to include more diverse voices.

Meeting times and locations

Many FPCs hold their meetings during the day, which is conducive to members whose involvement on the council is part of their work responsibilities, but this would exclude potential members who work during the day in jobs that don't allow for their participation.

Limited number of seats

Additionally, FPCs struggle with balancing their desire to be inclusive with the need to be efficient by incorporating representatives from select food system sectors or keeping the number of council members at a manageable level. One interviewee described the challenge:

"There's such a careful juggling act of representing various aspects of the food system and people who are different stakeholders in the food system as well as having racial diversity and economic diversity as well as various components of our city and there's only 11 people, so each person is responsible for a significant portion of that diversity." (26)

Another interviewee cautioned that while it's important that low-income residents' concerns are addressed by the FPC, "it's important that we don't pack the board with low-income people because that's not all we do" (6b).

Challenges of engaging people in "food policy"

The newness of the FPC phenomenon makes the work less easily understood or communicated to non-professionals. Some FPCs mentioned that a challenge of their work is their focus on food policy and food systems thinking, which can be difficult concepts to grasp and connect with initially. The policy process for changing a zoning ordinance to allow for a community garden can be much less engaging than the process of actually starting a community garden; policy is "less tangible and in some ways less accessible" than projects (8).

Naturally, the "people who know the most about this nascent food economy are the ones who are actually in it...probably the average consumer going to a big box for their groceries is not likely to resonate with the values behind the policies or not likely to be like 'Oh, I see this major problem and I want to address it with this policy'The policies are...not likely to come from the folks who don't see a problem" (11). Interviewees described the differences in food systems perspectives and understanding between council members who have been "immersed in [food system work] for five, 10, or 30 years" and community members who "aren't in the food system, and don't work within the food system, or they do but they're scrambling to make ends meet day to day" (30).

Some FPC members described instances where community members without a policy background who participate on FPCs "haven't been able to 'get' policy," despite honest attempts by other members to frame food policy in an understandable way, and drop out within a year (15). Understanding the complexity of many local policy processes has challenged even the food systems professionals on the councils, many of whom have not worked with local governments before.

"I get how the federal government works when you're passing policy, but on the local level it's like it goes through this committee and that committee and four different departments have to weigh in on it...So we're going to have a teaching session for the Food Policy Council on how all of that stuff works in the city." (26)

Additionally, because policy change is not an instant process, it requires what one interviewee described as a "long-term commitment to the process. One policy change can take 12 to 18 months"(8). This drawn-out process can make it difficult to keep even the most passionate people "motivated to push, work, research, inform, advocate for that entire time for one thing." In thinking about reaching non-professionals, or "residents who are pressed for all sorts of other demands on their time," in policy work, FPCs expressed feeling challenged to find strategies that will be engaging (8).

An additional challenge to policy work is that FPCs must be careful on how much money they spend on political activities that could be construed as lobbying.

Motivating others, getting community buy-in and leadership

Some FPCs mentioned that they struggle with how to get community buy-in and motivate community members to take on leadership roles in the council.

"We just don't know how to get that continuity, that buy-in, that feeling as if it's yours. If we felt like we had more long-term buy in, we might be able to step back from [running] the farmers' market all together. For example, one of the people on the advisory committee said, 'We've really got to get youth in here. I know there are people at

my church who will do it' so we said, 'We'll support you to get that started, but it's not our community, we don't have the ability to go to your church.' And he just basically didn't do it." (15)

Anti-government sentiments

Some FPC members felt their association with the government made them appear less welcoming to community members, especially community members who may have previously felt ignored due to structural discrimination. Additionally, many farmers and community residents just:

"...want government out of their business. Out of their projects and what they're doing in their neighborhood and don't really care

what city hall or county government really thinks about that." (8)

Diversity of the food system sectors, but not in personal demographics

Many FPCs indicated that having council members who were racially and economically diverse was important, but that they primarily prioritize diversity of food sectors.

"The first thing we look at is what their experience is and then what sector they're from. And the last part is the demographics - age, ethnicity, etc. ... but it is experience and background in the system - that's the first priority." (30)

Discussion

Certainly the alternative food movement as a whole is beginning to recognize and embrace issues of justice in the food system, and, as shown in the analysis of interviews above, many FPC members are thinking about how their policies, programs, and organizational structures are supporting more just food systems. They mentioned concerns about finding meeting times and locations that worked for a wide variety of members, setting aside seats on the council for youth, and involving low-income residents on projects that relate to food security. There are, however, two inter-related areas of concern that emerged during the interviews: meaningful inclusion and the culture of the council. Recommendations for increased inclusion follow this discussion section.

Meaningful inclusion

Earlier in this paper, the concept of inclusion was introduced as the ways in which communities that are most affected by food system injustices are given a voice in defining the food-related problems and shaping solutions. Arnstein's ladder of inclusion offers us a scale to review if different methods of citizen participation either promote empowerment or are actually "empty rituals" that don't offer people "the real power needed to affect the outcome of the process"¹³. Applied to FPCs, "meaningful inclusion" of diverse community residents is not simply an invitation to participate, but a practice that ensures that all participants feel comfortable and supported in making contributions and that their opinions are listened to and respected.

"Meaningful inclusion" of diverse community residents is not simply an invitation to participate, but a practice that ensures that all participants feel comfortable and supported in making contributions and that their opinions are listened to and respected.

While FPCs may hold meetings that are open to the public, they should be careful not to confuse lack of participation of community members with disinterest. Leo Vazquez identifies the tendency for white urban planners to say "If they don't show up at the [meeting], they don't care," which he says highlights a lack of cultural competence.²² Most planners have a personal or professional frame of reference that says: "If you care about your place, you participate in civic life." But this attitude ignores that some stakeholders may feel intimidated or uncomfortable expressing themselves among professionals²². To some extent, FPCs interviewed recognized the factors of inclusion and exclusion; one interviewee recognized that although they are welcoming of all community members, the fact that they did not specifically seek out representatives from communities or sectors that are not traditionally represented on their council created a condition where those representatives did not choose to participate.

"While there wasn't an effort to exclude, there wasn't an effort to purposefully make sure they were there...You can't just say, "Oh, everybody's welcome..." They won't show up...You need to make an effort, and we...didn't." (43)

Despite bringing people together from diverse food system sectors, many of the councils we surveyed suggested that their councils experienced very little conflict, but attributed this to their focus on “smaller, feel-good projects” such as a county fair and to the genuine rapport the council members felt for each other. However it is likely that as councils begin to address more complex or controversial topics or seek to be more inclusive, conflict will result. Hassanein cautions that when making choices, conflict is inevitable, and rather than something to avoid is actually a measure of change²³. It is within the context of active, participatory local political and planning processes that she believes participants have the most opportunity to work out their differences and find workable solutions.

Culture of the council

The culture of the council and attitude of the chair can have a direct impact on the council's appearance as an inclusive or non-inclusive space. The attitude toward diversity represented on the council from the start often shapes the types of members it includes in the future. Many FPCs interviewed developed from an informal network, choosing members for their first generation from a short list developed from members already active in the food system. Reliance on existing networks may limit who feels welcome to join the FPC in the future.

Kim Bobo warns "if you want racial, ethnic, gender, and class integration, the leadership must reflect this from the very start. Once the leaders are established as being one kind of person, other kinds of people will stay away"²⁴. One interviewee stated that their first-round members were selected primarily from their existing network but acknowledged that the reliance on selecting people from their network could potentially lead to a council "who looks just like you and thinks just like you" (11).

Another FPC mentioned that the lack of diversity on their council was already impacting their ability to attract people of color because of historical experiences of communities of color being "helped" or "served" by all-white organizations. Despite hearing directly from people of color who staff food systems-related programs in their city that the issues the council discusses are important to them, the council chair "can't even get them to come to meetings" because of these underlying tensions (34).

"If you want racial, ethnic, gender, and class integration, the leadership must reflect this from the very start."

Although some FPCs have included language about reflecting the representation of the community or working on projects that address food security and inclusion of diverse community residents in their missions or guiding documents, for the most part members who were interviewed expressed that most efforts to be inclusive of diverse community residents occurred because of the personal orientation of their chair and council members. One FPC chair said that as long as she was chair "we'll probably emphasize low-income because that's my passion," but "after a year, when there's a new leadership, we may have a new emphasis" (6b). An added concern regarding the role of the chairperson is the need for strong leadership and political savvy; without this, there is potential for a member organization or individual member to dominate the council.

Kate Clancy comments that effective FPC leaders embody a number of key qualities such as "vision, personalities that encourage sharing and community building, major management skills, significant time commitment, and

incredible patience"²⁵. Beyond these skills, leaders also bring their personal backgrounds and professional interests to the position. Leaders or chairs who have no personal predilection towards including diverse community members or discussing racism in the food system will not prioritize such activities.

Having certain people with a strong food justice perspective has helped maintain that focus for the council as a whole.

Having certain people with a strong food justice perspective has helped maintain that focus for the council as a whole. At times councils have sought out particular members because of their

professional experience and personal framework, such as one person who is both a producer and a food justice advocate, or others who on council chair described as “reality check” type of people (15).

"There were three different people [at the council meeting] who said 'No, this is actually the most important piece of the work and it needs to be included because our work is centered around justice.' It was the director of our food bank, someone else that runs a men's shelter, and someone else that runs a community action council." (34)

The following section offers specific recommendations for thinking about broadening participation and engagement.

Recommendations towards inclusion

In order to achieve higher levels of meaningful inclusion, councils should consider the opportunities for involvement throughout their development, make an effort to “know their community” by conducting in-depth research in the communities they operate in, provide more education and training of council members on both food policy and cultural competency, focus on relationship building among council members, adopt techniques of community organizers, and work to build inclusive councils.

Inclusion throughout the council’s development

Offering a variety of ways for communities to be involved in food system activities can be an important way to engage people of differing incomes and cultures²⁶. However, FPCs need to consider what opportunities for participation they offer throughout their council’s development, and not wait to invite people after the council’s priorities and culture has been established.

Meaningful inclusion can begin with making clear statements about the importance of diverse representation on the council. As described earlier, one FPC explicitly addressed the council’s diversity in their mission statement. However, as noted, despite this directive, this FPC had not yet diversified their council membership, so questions remain as to how far language alone can go in ensuring actual representation.

Meaningful inclusion of vulnerable groups requires their participation in every stage of the council’s work, from setting priorities and goals, to initiating and then later evaluating the projects. This practice is more common with environmental justice and food sovereignty groups, who have argued for the inclusion of

historically marginalized people in developing long-term solutions to inequity¹⁵. When setting council priorities, most FPCs shaped their general goals and strategies internally, debating among the council members and working group members who were at the table, but not doing specific outreach to their broader community until they considered specific projects or policies.

Meaningful inclusion of vulnerable groups requires their participation in every stage of the council’s work, from setting priorities and goals, to initiating and then later evaluating the projects.

When selecting neighborhoods to focus their work on, FPCs often chose to focus on food desert neighborhoods because of the obvious opportunities to address inequities in the food system. However, members of those communities were not always directly involved in collecting data to support the research. One FPC suggested that while they didn’t involve community members, it would have benefited their project and the council’s general work.

“I do think we would have more of a benefit to include a more diverse group of volunteers just because then it empowers people to feel like ‘I do have a place in this community and I can make change, positive change in the community.’ Maybe some of these people, it would be nice to know if they really wanted access to produce nearby. It would be nice to have that information to say that there is demand from people who actually live in this neighborhood that want to buy healthy food.” (9)

In a few cases, FPCs began their process of setting priorities by inviting the community to comment on a series of initial findings and choose the priorities from the list that they felt were most important for their region. But one FPC acknowledged "it was good for once in a blue moon, [but] there's no way to do that regularly" (8).

Council membership requires not only the time to participate, but also the ability to participate; council members ideally understand the dynamics of collaborative decision-making and have food system or policy experience. When working to include non-traditional council members, councils need to consider either altering their structures and/or offering training to ensure that all members can "participate pro-actively and effectively on their own terms"²⁶. Although many of the activities and processes discussed in the interviews show that FPCs are actively engaging residents for honest reasons, there is a threat that efforts to include diverse community residents on councils are simply for the sake of diversity or that "inviting them to the table" doesn't go far enough to ensure equitable outcomes. FPCs should deeply consider how their structure, policies, culture, and frames of reference impact who participates and how they participate.

Last, meaningful inclusion during projects entails involving community members in every stage of a project, with training and support where needed. Only a few FPCs demonstrated this level of inclusion, such as in the case of a food insecurity report project that involved food-insecure community members in forming the questions, conducting the surveys, and creating recommendations. The council members partnered with researchers and students at a local university to initiate the project but let the community members make the important decisions that determined the

course of the project (once they had been recruited).

In addition to actively seeking broad participation from the whole food system, projects that promote meaningful social inclusion typically need to devote resources to developing the capacities of the disadvantaged groups and individuals. Developing these skills helps enable participants to be able to move beyond just token levels of inclusion. In some situations, unequal treatment can arise due to speech and communication styles. Certain styles of speaking are privileged over others in most institutions; white supremacy culture dominates the norms of many of our institutions, privileging reasoned argumentations over storytelling²⁷. Meetings should allow for a variety of methods for sharing information (storytelling, written communication, presentations, time-limited sharing), but can also challenge members to try out a method that is less familiar or comfortable to them.

...there is a threat that efforts to include diverse community residents on councils are simply for the sake of diversity or that "inviting them to the table" doesn't go far enough to ensure equitable outcomes.

Knowing your community

Understanding a community's specific socio-demographics, cultural habits, and history (specifically around food and agriculture) should be foundational work for any FPC. This is important because of food's place as a cultural commodity that is meaningful to different groups in different ways. Additionally, community members may associate agriculture with past injustices, such as slavery or the appropriation of Native American land for

farming. Understanding these associations, connections, and pre-existing relationships is important for appreciating how community members interact with the food system today.

Consider some of the big picture questions about the community's food system such as: what are the local resources, what are the local needs, what are the major social problems in the area, and how do these problems relate to food system problems? Data about population demographics, major economic activities, economic indicators, and government budgets can be combined with other food system data for a community food assessment. Resources such as the local Chamber of Commerce and census data available from federal and state sources are possible places to start. For an even richer picture of the community, the FPC should consider conducting ethnographic research in specific communities. In many cases, communities that have been historically marginalized from policy decisions are distrustful of "outsiders," and so it is very important that FPCs demonstrate at least a historical understanding of those communities.

Many FPCs consistently invite community members and professionals (in the food system or related health or academic fields) to their meetings to share their knowledge and experience in an effort to increase the memberships' knowledge of specific aspects of the food system. At other times, FPCs have organized tours of the community's farms, farmers' markets, community gardens, or food deserts in their area. Such opportunities should be offered to improve the council members' understanding of their community's demographics, specific food insecurity concerns experienced by community members, or understand structural discrimination present in their local food system.

Council member education and training

To improve engagement with diverse community residents, education and training for council members should include both cultural competency and anti-oppression skills. Dealing with issues of institutional racism and historic disinvestment in communities is difficult, but necessary, work in creating a just and equitable food system.

In some cases, members themselves can be the educators to other council members about food justice or food democracy. Having members on the council whose professional work or personal framework fits within "food justice" has helped other council members to understand how their food system work is impacted by local and national power dynamics. FPCs have at times sought out council members who specifically bring that perspective.

"There's a need for a lot of education around how power issues play into food policy work...I think most people once they hear it think "Ok, yeah that makes sense" but they just haven't thought about these issues in terms of justice - especially when they're coming at it from an anti-obesity standpoint or a health care standpoint or physical activity standpoint - so I think they haven't had the time to connect those dots yet." (34)

Interviewees reinforced the importance of good facilitation of group discussions about these challenging topics. Trainings around leading effective meetings could help prepare council members to take on more responsibility in conducting meetings or prepare new members to participate more effectively. Training can also focus on building members' cultural competency skills or enable them to better engage with diverse group members. One council conducted a series of Community

Conversations events, with one evening of group discussions focused on real scenarios of local families dealing with food insecurity. Council members were asked to specifically consider how their council work in the city's food system could help move the families closer to food security. A few councils interviewed mentioned that they are planning to incorporate anti-racism training into their regular council training.

Relationship building

Alethea Harper and her co-authors explain that "policy work is not just about laws, regulations, budgets, and politics," but rather policy change is more often the "result of one very important human activity, namely relationship building"¹.

One council member stated "developing relationships is key to moving the work forward" (22). Relationships between the council and local policy-makers, between council members and community organization leaders, and among council members are all important. Building relationships and developing mutual trust allows food system representatives to step outside of their "silos" – or specific areas of expertise – and turn their attention to areas of the food system that need strengthening⁶. These particular attributes are what make relationships a critical part of a council's ability to effectively include diverse community members.

"policy work is not just about laws, regulations, budgets, and politics," but rather policy change is more often the "result of one very important human activity, namely relationship building."

Building trust is crucial for mediating relationships between different groups and especially between groups where oppression has been the historical precedent. Allocating time at each meeting for members to share stories helps build relationships between members and connects people who might have seemingly dissimilar backgrounds. One council rotates meeting sites among the different represented food system sectors, including a grocery store, the conference room at the Chamber of Commerce, a brewery bottling facility, and a farm, to garner a more complete understanding of each member's perspective.

Lessons from community organizing

FPCs can learn a tremendous amount from community organizing methods and techniques that specifically seek to engage and empower community residents in solving problems that directly affect their lives. None of the councils interviewed for this research are consistently using community organizing techniques in their work, although a few engage community organizers as council members. Council members who are professional community organizers bring food system topics from the council to their community in the process of their organization's primary mission. This might be an appropriate technique given how labor-intensive building membership-based community organizations can be, especially among the poor. At times, FPCs do partner with community-based organizations to support a specific event or policy agenda that the constituents may be interested in.

For FPCs, taking a community organizing perspective would involve working directly with people who have the most at stake and whose self-interest is the focus of the council's work in bringing about change for their own lives. Anti-racism and cultural competency are at the core of effective community organizing; removing

"sexism, classism, and racism from the ranks of movement leaders" is not simply a moral imperative, but also a strategic one because community organizing campaigns "find it difficult to win their fights if the people most affected by negative policies and trends are not at the forefront, making strategic, as well as technical, decisions"²⁸. Therefore, by incorporating more diverse people in making strategic decisions, FPCs can strengthen their efforts. Likewise, community-based organizations should think of FPCs as allies that enable them to connect with leaders and agents of change in the food system to coordinate policy changes that may be beyond the capacity of a single community organization.

Removing "sexism, classism, and racism from the ranks of movement leaders" is not simply a moral imperative, but also a strategic one because community organizing campaigns "find it difficult to win their fights if the people most affected by negative policies and trends are not at the forefront, making strategic, as well as technical, decisions."

However, interviews for this research revealed that when choosing what topics or projects to work on, councils often prioritize issues that relate to the work of their members, not necessarily issues that related directly to a community-prioritized need. In a few cases, councils looked at the demographics of their communities and picked projects that directly affected certain populations. For example, one council started working with Hmong growers after it recognized that they were being discriminated against at the farmers' market. It is rare, however, for councils to hold open meetings with the community and ask: "What

do you want us to work on?" However, council members could do so and use their professional expertise and political connections to work on a problem defined by the community, alongside diverse community residents.

Many FPCs are already poised to engage in a community organizing approach because the spaces that they often help to create, such as farmers' markets, can serve as community organizing "hubs" that attract potential participants²⁹. FPCs that use working groups are already structured in a way that mimics good community organizing techniques. Working groups, because of their smaller size and narrow focus on a particular topic, provide "the ideal environment for exploring the social and political aspects of personal problems and developing strategies for work toward social change"³⁰.

Corollary techniques to community organizing include Participatory Action Research (PAR) and popular education. PAR combines research with action through recognizing the expertise that local people possess about their own lives and environments, and by allowing communities to research their own problems, analyze them, and propose solutions³¹. PAR uses relationship building between stakeholders and fundamentally supports the empowerment of communities³². Similarly, popular education recognizes the expertise of community members and engages them as "learner-teachers," replacing traditional "teachers" with "teacher-learners," signifying that we all have the capacity to share and learn together.

Participatory democracy perspective often aligns with the community organizing perspective and believes "that regular people should be empowered to identify what is of utmost importance to their communities and set the agenda for their lives"³³. Allen writes

that efforts that include both community organizing and FPC activities represent a deep kind of democratization by increasing self-determination in food issues and building connections between people that extend to civic and political life beyond the food system.³⁴

...“regular people should be empowered to identify what is of utmost importance to their communities and set the agenda for their lives.”

Conclusion

The demographic shifts underway in U.S. communities suggest that people of color will soon be the majority in many states. Because food is universal in its reach, the transformation and democratization of the food system cannot be achieved without the participation and leadership of people of color¹. FPCs are not the only location for citizen involvement in the food system. Other great opportunities exist at farmers' markets and grocery stores, in community gardens, at shared dinner tables, on online forums, or at protests, for example. And while FPCs may not be the most accessible location for citizen involvement, the work that they take on is often deeply relevant to communities of color and low-income communities. In fact, FPCs are one of the only locations within a local community for impacting policies that affect a resident's food access or food environment. Councils all have different missions or project goals, but, in the instances where they are concerned with issues that impact the community directly, empowering diverse community residents as participants in defining the food system problems they face and creating plausible solutions is a vital role of FPCs. FPCs, then, have a real opportunity and imperative to both embody justice and improve their effectiveness by meaningfully including diverse community residents.

While many leaders in the alternative food movement may agree with the sentiment of citizen engagement, operationalizing

meaningful inclusion may be a challenge for some. The lessons of past citizen participation efforts reveal that those who hold power may prove resistant to truly sharing power with marginalized communities. As FPCs continue to work within the alternative food system, they should prioritize engaging diverse community residents wherever possible while also reflecting on approaches that support the empowerment of currently marginalized groups within the food system. Council members must reflect on their position in existing racial and power hierarchies that exist in society, the food system, and on the council.

Much more documentation and evaluation of FPCs' methods is needed in order to understand if or how the engagement strategies are helping councils achieve their goals of increasing food security in their communities. This research follows from the perspective that citizen inclusion is a value in and of itself and a value to FPCs specifically. While this perspective has been informed by theoretically-based literature from various disciplines, it nonetheless has lessons of value to FPCs. Additionally, while diverse community residents are at the heart of this research, interviews were conducted only with existing council members. Further research could seek to evaluate how engagement of diverse community residents affects FPC policy or project outcomes and to gather perspectives from diverse community residents on how they would like to be involved in the work of FPCs.

Recommendations for further research

- *Evaluation of policy impacts*

While FPCs' operations are often oriented toward improving access to healthy food in their communities, the magnitude of this impact is still unconfirmed and there are few verified examples that demonstrate a direct correlation between council work and improved food security.

- *Evaluation of community inclusion efforts*

Many of the councils interviewed were at the beginning stages of their community inclusion and outreach efforts. Follow up could be done to assess the progress or outcomes of inclusionary efforts.

- *Interview community members about their involvement*

Future research could interview with community members who have participated on Food Policy Councils directly to judge if tactics for engagement were effective and appropriate.

-
- ¹ Harper, Alethea, Annie Shattuck, Eric Holt-Giménez, Alison Alkon, and Frances Lambrick. (2009). *Food policy councils: Lessons learned*. Oakland, CA: Food First/Institute for Food and Development Policy. Retrieved from <http://www.foodfirst.org/sites/www.foodfirst.org/files/pdf/Food%20Policy%20Councils%20Report%20small.pdf>
 - ² Guthman, Julie. (2008). "If they only knew": Color blindness and universalism in California alternative food institutions. *The Professional Geographer*, 60(3), 387—397.
 - ³ Harris, Keecha. (2007). *Growing the community food movement: From the ground up, a community food systems primer*. Southern Sustainable Agriculture Working Group.
 - ⁴ Slocum, R. (2006a). Anti-racist practice and the work of community food organizations. *Antipode*, 38(2), 327-349.
 - ⁵ Slocum, R. (2006b). Whiteness, space and alternative food practice. *Geoforum*. doi:10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.006
 - ⁶ Winne, Mark. (2008). *Closing the food gap: Resetting the table in the land of plenty*. Boston: Beacon Press.
 - ⁷ Growing Food and Justice Initiative. (2009). 2009 Interviews 1 of 3 GFJI. Retrieved from http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwNyPyxZS1I&list=UU_uSoZhyw19Af_-dfVm1YnQ&index=3&feature=plcp
 - ⁸ Alkon, Alison Hope and Julian Agyeman (Eds.). (2011). *Cultivating food justice: Race, class, and sustainability*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.
 - ⁹ US Census Bureau. (2004, March 18) U.S. interim projections by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/>
 - ¹⁰ Schiff, Rebecca. (2007). *Food policy councils: An examination of organizational structure, process, and contribution to alternative food movements*. (Doctoral Dissertation). Institution for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Western Australia.
 - ¹¹ Pope, Patricia. (2007). *Illusion of inclusion*. Retrieved from <http://www.popeandassociates.com/illusionofinclusion.pdf>
 - ¹² Allen, Patricia. (2010). Realizing justice in the local food system. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, 3, 295-308.
 - ¹³ Arnstein, Sherry R. (1969). A ladder of citizen participation. *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*, 35(4), 216-224.
 - ¹⁴ Morris, Aldon and Suzanne Staggenborg. (2004). Leadership in Social Movements. In D. A. Snow, S. A. Soule, and H. Kriesi (Eds.), *The Blackwell Companion To Social Movements (171-196)*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing.
 - ¹⁵ Loh, Penn and Phoebe Eng (Eds.). (March 2010). *Environmental justice and the green economy: A vision statement and case studies for just and sustainable solutions*. Roxbury, MA: Alternatives for Community & Environment, Inc. Retrieved from http://www.weact.org/Portals/7/Publications/EJGE_Report_English.pdf
 - ¹⁶ Warrix, Marisa, Cheryle Syracuse, and Ruben Nieto. (2000). Development of educational materials: Sensitizing nutrition educators to cultural diversity. *Multicultural Perspectives*, 2(1), 14-17.

-
- ¹⁷ Willis, Arlette Ingram. (2008). Critical race theory. In B.V. Street and N. H. Hornberger (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of language and education, Volume 2: Literacy*. (2nd ed., 15-28). New York, NY: Springer Science + Business Media.
- ¹⁸ Cabbil, Lila. (2010). "Food Movements Unite" panel. 2010 Community Food Security Coalition Conference. Retrieved from <http://vimeo.com/16464046>
- ¹⁹ White, Monica M. (2010). Shouldering responsibility for the delivery of human rights: A case study of the D-Town farmers of Detroit. *Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts*, 3(2), 189-211.
- ²⁰ Hamilton, Neil D. (2002) Putting a face on our food: How state and local food policies can promote the new agriculture. *Drake Journal of Agricultural Law*, 7(2), 408-454.
- ²¹ Gottlieb, Robert and Andrew Fisher. (1995). *Community food security: Policies for a more sustainable food system in the context of the 1995 farm bill and beyond*. Working Paper No. 13. The Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies, UCLA School of Public Affairs, UC Los Angeles.
- ²² Vazquez, Leo. (2009, November 11). Principles of culturally competent planning and placemaking. Retrieved from <http://rutgerspdi.blogspot.com/2009/11/principles-of-culturally-competent.html>
- ²³ Hassanein, Neva. (2003). Practicing food democracy: A pragmatic politics of transformation. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 19, 77-86.
- ²⁴ Bobo, K., Kendall, J., and Max, S. (2001). *Organizing for social change*. Santa Ana, CA: Seven Locks Press.
- ²⁵ Clancy, Kate. (1988). *Eight elements critical to the success of food system councils*. Local Food Systems Project. Retrieved from <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~dahlberg/F1.pdf>.
- ²⁶ Hinrichs, Clare and Kathy S. Kremer. (2002). Social inclusion in a Midwest local food system project. *Journal of Poverty*, 6(1), 65-90.
- ²⁷ Allen, Patricia. (1999). Reweaving the food security safety net: Mediating entitlement and entrepreneurship. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 16, 117-129.
- ²⁸ Sen, Rinku. (2003). *Stir it up: Lessons in community organizing and advocacy*. San Francisco: John Wiley Sons, Inc.
- ²⁹ Alkon, Alison Hope. (2008). Paradise or pavement: The social constructions of the environment in two urban farmers' markets and their implications for environmental justice and sustainability. *Local Environment*, 13(3), 271-289.
- ³⁰ Gutierrez, Lorraine and Edith Lewis. (1997). Education, participation, and capacity building in community organizing with women of color. In M. Minkler (Ed.), *Community organizing and community building for health* (216-239). New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- ³¹ Reardon, Kenneth M. (1998). Participatory action research as service learning. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 73, 57-64.
- ³² Rimkus, Leah (Ed.). (2003). *The San Francisco food systems guidebook*. The San Francisco Food Systems Council. Retrieved from <http://www.scribd.com/doc/44427893/San-Francisco-Food-Systems-Guidebook>.
- ³³ Pyles, Loretta. (2009). *Progressive community organizing*. London: Taylor and Frances Group, LLC.
- ³⁴ Allen, Patricia. (2004). *Together at the table: Sustainability and sustenance in the American agrifood system*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.